

**MINUTES
CITY OF BLOOMINGTON
COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABILITY**

Tuesday, October 14, 2008 6:00 p.m.
McCloskey Room, City Hall, 401 North Morton Street

Roll Call:

Members present: Bob Bent, Ken Berglund, Christine Glaser, John Hamilton, George Huntington, Laura Kamp, Dave Rollo, Paul Schneller, Cynthia Schultz, Jim Sherman

Regrets: Steve Ashkin, Toby Strout

Staff present: Adam Wason, Michael Leahey

Call to Order/Approval of Minutes:

Meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm. There was a motion to strike several comments about water pricing from the September minutes, given that the topic will be addressed directly during this meeting. The September minutes were approved unanimously.

Public Comment:

There was no public comment.

Announcements:

There were no announcements.

Committee Reports:

STAR

Cynthia Schultz proposed a change in the title of the report, from 'Sustainability Assessment Report' to 'Sustainability Trends Assessment Report.' The change was approved unanimously.

Cynthia reported that the STAR subgroup has begun meeting every other Monday. The group is in the process of defining its goals, selecting a framework, and vetting the metrics to be used for the 2009 report. It will include selected metrics from the 2007 report, plus new metrics based on outside best-practices. The group intends that the report not be the final output, but that the BCOS utilize the report to make policy recommendations to the Mayor.

The 2007 SAR will be presented to City Council at an upcoming meeting; the date and time will be announced to the Commission when it becomes available.

Initiatives

The Initiatives Committee is still seeking a chairperson. He mentioned that he and John Hamilton had breakfast with IU Sustainability Taskforce chairman Michael Hamburger,

who thanked the Commission for its congratulations letter, and proposed meeting in the near future to discuss the potential for collaboration.

Education

Members of the BCOS and EC met with the Mayor to discuss the joint transportation letter from the Environmental and Sustainability Commissions' 'Greenhouse Gas Emissions' workgroup. The mayor emphasized 3 key points in response:

- He intends to push a bicycle and pedestrian initiative (including IU, Bloomington and Monroe county). Jim Sherman commented that creating new crosswalks alone is dangerous, in that drivers are unaccustomed to them and don't stop. Several members commented that Bloomington is not yet a pedestrian-friendly city.
- He plans to create a Sustainability Director position to relieve some stress on Adam Wason by Spring 2009. John suggested the potential for having this new position and the IU Taskforce Director be a joint position, or at least to have them work closely together.
- He wants to devote resources to a 'Green energy corps' volunteer coordinating effort, and hopes to have a Transportation Summit in the next 12 months.

Paul Schneller and Bob Bent described an ongoing collaboration with Professor Tom Evans, IU Faculty and Geology professor. A number of students will be gathering data and preparing analysis for trends of interest to the commission, including population, local food production, water usage, waste disposal, and small business, and green building. Prof. Evans will explore the possibility of having the students present their final reports directly to the Commission in December.

Future Project Areas

Adam mentioned that IU President McRobbie offered Professors Hamburger and Sullivan as contacts for collaboration efforts.

He mentioned that the US Green Building Council local chapter looking is to host a mixer to bring the green building community together, and to coordinate initiatives.

He noted that the Indiana Association of Cities and Towns recognized Bloomington as the first annual "Green Community of the Year." Adam was thanked for his effort in developing Bloomington's application. Various members asked to see the criteria to better understand the process. Adam will make the criteria available.

He mentioned that Steve Ashkin's Green Cleaning Workshop was inspirational to the facilities staff.

He noted that the Chamber's Environmental Stewardship Committee met and dispersed information on minimal-effort, environmentally friendly improvements.

Water Utility Presentation

Jack Wittman and Sherry Mitchell-Bruker from Wittman Hydroplanning Associates (WHPA) and Patrick Murphy, Director of Utilities, were introduced to the Commission to discuss proposed improvements and expansion of the city's Water supply.

Mr. Murphy commented that there are 3 divisions (water, wastewater, and storm water). The utility is governed by Utilities Service Board, and has a budget of \$27M, funded strictly by ratepayers, with 165 employees. The Lake Monroe Water treatment plant, online since 1967, has approximately a 24M gallon / day capacity.

Mr. Wittman replied that there are 2 key issues: a) reliability and safety, as the plant is running full-time during peak hours which is bad for its ultimate sustainability, and that a redundant pipe is a security necessity; b) capacity expansion.

While recognizing public concern over the treatment plan expansion, he noted that in looking at maximum daily capacity, the USB recommended expanding water treatment plant capacity to 30M/day, and construction of a redundant line. WHPA is currently auditing the system's dynamics and considering conservation alternatives. The short term goal is to "trim the peaks" from peak demand and increase security and efficiency, with longer term goals of maintaining the water shed, and conservation.

Bob asked about the ultimate capacity of Lake Monroe, and Mr. Wittman responded that it was between 50 and 100M gallons per day, with the lake's lifetime estimated between 50 and 100 years, depending on upstream management of the watershed. He added that there had not been a "safe-yield" study since 1965. He also mentioned longer term alternatives of adding a second plant, accessing new water fields, and tapping Griffey Lake and or Lake Lemon.

Dave Rollo commented that CBU pays 54% of rate but only use 40% of water, while wholesalers pay 16% but are likely responsible for much of increase in usage. Mr. Wittman replied that they now have new, better data, and that Crowe Howrath is conducting a 'cost of service' study. Dave voiced a concern that the current pricing structure is subsidizing suburban sprawl, and asked if alternative energy was being considered to power the treatment of wastewater.

Several BCOS members stated for the record that the commission advocates a Volume Pricing solution to the issue of alleviating demand, promoting conservation, and potentially forestalling capacity expansion.

Jim and Christine questioned the simultaneity of increasing consumption and promoting conservation. Christine specified that the cost of service study makes sense in that the city could use pricing to drive down demand, thus reducing peak demand, and obviating expansion and its costs.

Mr. Wittman replied that rate setting is an elaborate process that has a regulatory path of its own, separate from the engineering issues, but there is an opening to work together.

Mr. Murphy added that ‘conservation rate structures’ should be explored, but that we must factor in the needs of other stakeholders.

Dave mentioned that Black & Veatch had performed a water valuation study, and opined that the author was biased towards water expansion. He requested that WHPA take a neutral, not pro-expansion, perspective. Mr. Wittman asserted that the organization is indeed neutral.

Ms. Mitchell-Bruker led a presentation detailing the company’s process; in terms of the water systems audit, demand study, goal definition, review of conservation measures, and benefit/ costs analysis. Their report is due for completion by June 2009. She asked for input in terms of existing community conservation projects, ideas and opportunities. Michael has emailed them to ask for a copy of their powerpoint presentation.

In response to a member question, she noted that 25% of water usage comes from outside the city, 25% from single family residences inside the city, 25% from IU 25%, and 25% from other sources. Dave asked about the wholesaler contribution to peak. Mr. Wittman replied that it is a “smaller proportionate peak” than residences because the wholesalers have buffers, and Mr. Murphy noted that they receive a lower rate because Utilities doesn’t have to maintain their systems in the same manner as household water systems.

In response to a question about existing volume pricing, Mr. Murphy replied that currently irrigation is charged at a higher-rate per unit, but that they do not pay for sewage so the net rate is approximately the same as non-irrigation uses.

Dave commented generally about instituting ordinance based reductions. Ms. Mitchell-Bruker replied that while they should be investigated, it is uncertain whether ordinance-based measures have been more effective than voluntary measures in other cities.

Mr. Murphy offered to schedule a private tour of the plant for Commission members.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:05 pm.

The next meeting of the BCOS will be held on November 11, 2008 in the McCloskey conference room of City Hall at 6 pm.